

Core Services Category: Education

Study Area: Student Achievement, Teacher Quality and Influence of Teacher Preparation Program

Proposed Directive: Implement the proposal in the state's race to the top application to establish a link between student growth and teacher performance and a corresponding link between teacher performance and teacher preparation programs, with the professional practices and standards commission recommending that the secretary of public education close persistently ineffective teacher preparation programs.

High-Level Recommendation: Propose legislation either in the form of a temporary statute with a sunset clause or a memorial requesting a full study of the issue. For the study to be thorough and to identify the various implications that could emerge from changes in statute and rule related to teacher evaluation, a wide array of stakeholder groups will need to be involved and the study will require funding. A study conducted in the recent past on the public school funding formula could serve as a model for outreach, inclusion and development of a new policy framework.

Problem Statement:

➤ *State the problem — inefficiency, ineffectiveness, cost-saving opportunity, etc.*

The central problem this initiative seeks to address is how best to correlate student academic achievement with the performance of individual teachers and, consequently, to identify teacher preparation programs in the state of New Mexico that are persistently underperforming as measured by the in-class performance of their graduates.

New Mexico currently has some capacity to correlate student performance on standards-based assessments to individual teachers; however, a fully articulated ability to link teacher preparation programs and program graduate performance as determined by student academic achievement has not been developed. As required by statute, the various teacher preparation programs cooperatively generate the annual educator accountability report. This report currently provides information from the various teacher preparation programs related to the number of program completers, fields of study and ethnicity and includes information on teacher scores related to licensure, but it does not make any connection with student performance. Currently there exists no direct connection between the databases maintained by the various institutions of higher education (IHEs) and the public education department's student teacher accountability reporting system (STARS), i.e., K-12 data system. Developing this connection is part of a larger policy goal to create a seamless P-20 data system that integrates the various data systems from not only the education agencies but other agencies.

Background and Findings:

➤ *Explain how a function or process works today. Cite appropriate statutes or other authoritative references.*

The state implemented a three-tiered teacher licensure system in 2003 as a component of the public schools reforms bill (Laws 2003, Chapter 153). Consequently, the licensure system

was established in Chapter 22, Article 10A NMSA 1978, the School Personnel Act. The evaluation system applies to all teachers at all three levels and is used to help determine annual performance within a licensure level, as well as for gauging readiness for movement between levels. To become licensed in New Mexico, beginning teachers must complete a preparation program recognized by the state, receive a degree and pass an initial licensure examination for entrance into the profession. The initial license, known as a level 1, is good for up to five years, with the statutory specifics of the licensure process detailed in Section 22-10A-7 NMSA 1978. During the initial licensure period, the teacher is to receive mentoring from qualified personnel and receive summative evaluations, which are detailed in Section 22-10A-9 NMSA 1978.

The evaluation system for teachers is further elaborated in 6.69.4 NMAC, which spells out the nine core competencies teachers are expected to demonstrate, time lines for submissions and the consequences for failure to complete the process on a timely basis or incompetence. Each of the nine competencies currently includes various elements that focus on improving student academic outcomes and comprises a significant focus on how teachers are evaluated. There is currently no statutory- or rules-mandated means in place for linking individual teachers and their student achievement back to preparation programs that teachers attended prior to licensure. The requirement for the educator accountability report is established in Section 22-10A-19.2 NMSA 1978.

➤ *Describe in detail the problem — inefficiency, ineffectiveness, cost-saving opportunity, etc. — and describe the impact of such to the state, local governments, business, clients, etc.*

- Having an evaluation program that gauges quality, effective teaching is a goal that many groups have sought to implement with mixed degrees of success. This challenge is particularly acute in regards to linking student achievement and academic growth to an individual teacher though the use of standardized/standards-based assessment (SBA). Some of the reasons for this limited applicability include the following:
 1. Not all subject areas have SBAs upon which to link student and teacher performance. The SBAs administered in New Mexico include reading, mathematics, science and social studies, thus leaving out such subjects as music, art, physical education, foreign languages and any other subject not within this group of four.
 2. SBAs are only administered in grades 3-8 and 11, thus excluding a substantial population of teachers, especially at the elementary and high school levels.
 3. State-level examinations are a snapshot in time and are unable to take into consideration whether students are sick the day of the exam or are otherwise compromised in their test-taking capacity by external factors, such as hunger, domestic situations, lack of engagement, etc.
 4. SBAs are administered in March, approximately three-quarters of the way through the academic year, and, therefore, cannot fully reflect what a student may learn for the entire school year.
 5. Not all teachers licensed and practicing in New Mexico attended a college of education within the state. Therefore, a distinct means of assessing the

performance of these individuals, vis-à-vis those who received their preparation in the state, will need to be articulated.

- The New Mexico SBA is aligned to the New Mexico content standards, benchmarks and performance standards and is made up of various types of questions including: multiple choice and constructed response, as well as a written component. Scores are based on meeting a certain level of mastery of the material and are recorded as a beginning step, nearing proficient, proficient and advanced. The cut scores that determine these various levels of achievement are set by a coordinating committee composed of educators from across the state as well as personnel from the public education department.
- Student scores on standardized exams can serve as one measure for teacher academic performance; however, overemphasis of this measure will likely serve to distort the perceived quality of any one teacher. Teaching is contingent upon a host of elements, not only upon individual quality and competence. The individual school situation is made up of a large number of external variables over which the teacher or a teacher preparation program has little, if any, control. These external factors include the socioeconomic status of the school population, substance or alcohol abuse within the household, domestic or sexual abuse among family members, unemployment status, mental or emotional problems, community crime, English language proficiency, special needs and others. While these factors affect all teachers at a school, special consideration must be exercised for beginning teachers. Any method put into place for gauging the quality of teacher preparation programs will have to take into account that beginning teachers need at least a couple of years to acculturate themselves to the reality of the profession. Conversely, in the sense of fairness to the preparation programs, some cut-off point must be established, perhaps at the fifth year of individuals being in the profession, in holding them accountable for the quality of their graduates. At that point, if the individuals have not been able to meet all competencies to move from a level 1 to level 2 license, they are statutorily required to be removed from the profession and must cease teaching in public schools in New Mexico. Beyond that five-year point, teacher preparation programs cannot realistically be held accountable for the ongoing performance of their graduates. Rather, the responsibility must be borne by the individual teacher and to an equal degree by the districts they teach in for lack of professional development, mentoring and other means of support for improving teaching quality.
 - **Provide documentation of the problem, inefficiency, ineffectiveness, etc.**

The public education department creates annual reports related to state, district and school performance related to the New Mexico SBA as well as other data related to public schools in the state. Readers are directed toward the agency web site (<http://www.ped.state.nm.us/>) to access electronic versions of these documents.
 - **Describe opportunities to solve problems and improve efficiencies and effectiveness.**
 - The current teacher evaluation system, based on meeting the various

competencies, mentoring, scoring process, etc., was developed in conjunction with the participation of administrators, teachers, IHE faculty and state agency personnel prior to being implemented in 2003. A review of the system should include members of the same stakeholder groups as well as from other interested parties as deemed appropriate.

- Because New Mexico's teacher evaluation system has been in place for several years, it may be considered to have achieved a level of maturity, with teachers having grown accustomed to meeting the various expectations it has established. Thus, revisiting the evaluation system for possible revision is justified.
- As referenced in the race to the top application, the value added system used by the state of Tennessee for teacher evaluation does not exist in New Mexico. Tennessee's system has been implemented over a period of several years and has included staff development to run the system properly and to be able to interpret data. If New Mexico chooses to implement a similar type of value-added evaluation system for teachers, various costs would have to be calculated.
- A value-added system of teacher evaluation as used in Tennessee is one option to consider. Other entities have developed systems of educator evaluation that should also be reviewed, e.g., Denver, Colorado; Toledo and Cincinnati, Ohio; the Millken family foundation's teacher assessment program (TAP); and the national board for professional teaching standards (NBPTS), for their possible applicability to New Mexico.
- If one of the goals of the study is to increase the number of effective teachers in high-needs schools, a system of incentives is probably called for to promote this type of staffing. Again, members of the work group could investigate what types of incentives, monetary and otherwise, could be developed.
- The federal government is currently considering the next reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The George W. Bush administration's reauthorization of ESEA was known as the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, which fundamentally altered the relationship between the federal government and state and district education authorities. The Obama administration could issue a reauthorization of ESEA that could produce major changes as well.

Options to Consider:

Summarize in priority order main options to address findings/problems.

Describe in detail the different elements of the options.

Describe the impact of the options to local governments, businesses, clients, etc.

Describe any other significant issues that should be considered in evaluating the option.

Elements of the Option:

- Pass legislation (either a temporary statute or a memorial) to form the work group to conduct the study. The work group itself will be responsible for developing the ultimate set of recommendations that is the goal of the study.
- Establish a work group composed of appropriate stakeholders to study:
 1. the current teacher evaluation system;
 2. the various methods that have been established across the country (e.g., Denver, Toledo and Cincinnati; the state of Tennessee; the Millken family foundation's TAP; the NBPTS; and others) that link student academic outcomes with individual teacher performance;
 3. how best to establish a means of determining the linkage between teacher preparation programs and the performance of their graduates who enter the teaching profession in New Mexico and implement this method in a cost-efficient manner; and
 4. the fairness and equitable protections, including due process, pay incentives, if any, and other elements, for supporting improved teacher quality provided by a modified or new evaluation plan.
- Provide state funding to support the activities of the work group. Items that are justified for receiving funding include:
 - meetings, transportation, per diem and mileage costs;
 - contractor and expert fees;
 - public comment opportunities;
 - reporting development and publication costs; and
 - cost assessments related to implementing recommendations developed by the work group.

Projected Impacts:

- Participants will be drawn from various state agencies, school districts, institutions of higher education, teacher unions and other nongovernmental organizations. Time committed by these groups for the study will draw them away from other job responsibilities, possibly causing conflicts with workloads and other obligations.
- Statutes and rules will be affected.
- Forms, administrative guidelines and manuals connected to the evaluation system will have to be revised.
- Training in the new evaluation system will need to be developed and implemented for teachers as well as those who conduct the evaluations.

Other Significant Issues:

- The current lack of a seamless P-20 data system in New Mexico currently impedes the ability of anyone to undertake the type of study requested in this directive in a time- and cost-efficient manner.
- To conduct this study, various staff members assigned to the study from among the stakeholder groups will need to identify data sources, secure ways of sharing data, determine compatibility of data, establish data access privileges, etc.
- Many of these details can be worked out by the data governance council, which was established in statute during the 2010 session. While a similar governance body was formed by executive order in 2009, the council established in statute is scheduled to meet for the first time in September.
- The council is co-chaired by the secretaries of public education and higher education with membership composed of representatives from various agencies, legislative committees, institutions of higher education and other entities. Because the current administration ends on December 31, 2010, it is probable that the individuals assigned to chair the council or to serve as members will likely be replaced.
- As a consequence of these various significant issues, the direction of policy formation through this body and the speed with which any new initiative can be implemented in the near term is uncertain.

Fiscal Implications:

Summarize estimated fiscal implications; consider whether savings/impacts to revenue affected by prior budget reductions or other savings initiatives considered by the task force:

- *Narrative, including potential savings, cost to implement or impact to revenues (itemize projected savings as much as possible)*
- *Table on GF and other funds savings, by fiscal year*
- *Table on GF and other funds cost to implement, by fiscal year*
- *Table on GF and other funds revenues impacts, by fiscal year*
- The state submitted an application in December 2009 to the institute of educational sciences within the U.S. department of education for a grant to develop a P-20 state longitudinal data system. The grant request was for \$20 million over a three-year period. This application was rejected. Consequently, the state is considering submission of a new application in the upcoming cycle expected to commence in January 2011. The dimensions of the funding request in the next application are not yet determined.

Implementation Plan:

- *Plan to implement recommendation (e.g., administratively, by rule or by law), including timing.*
- Pass temporary legislation or a memorial requesting a study during the 2011 legislative session.
- Form the work group in spring 2011 and allow work to commence from spring to

fall 2011, with hearings on recommendations in fall 2011.

- Legislation based on the recommendations of the work group could conceivably be proposed and passed during the 2012 session.
- Subsequent changes to rules could be achieved during spring 2012.

➤ *Identify key stakeholders/obstacles.*

❖ Key stakeholders include:

- the various entities identified as members of the data governance council established statutorily during the 2010 legislative session, including state agencies, legislative committees, institutions of higher education, school districts, charter schools, etc.;
- teacher unions; and
- other professional organizations related to education.

❖ Various obstacles include:

- the lack of a seamless P-20 data system;
- the end of the current executive administration, which will result in the probable turnover of many of the members assigned to the data governance council, which could produce significant changes in any established policy direction;
- uncertainty related to the passage of any legislation that would form a work group and to provide funding for its support and operation;
- uncertainty related to whether New Mexico will submit a new application for grant support to develop a SLDS and the related uncertainty concerning whether the grant will be awarded; and
- that each IHE has an independent board of regents. Colleges of education often serve as a large source of funding for IHEs. If a college of education is threatened with being shut down for lack of performance there is a high probability the regents would do whatever they could to see that did not happen.

➤ *Plan to capture savings.*

- Until a full cost study is completed, potential savings, if any, remain unidentified.
- Because of the scope of the study and the need for an enhanced longitudinal data system to conduct the types of analyses required, there may be significant future costs.

➤ *Identify "champion" responsible for implementation.*

- Indeterminate.

